

Textile Waste in Skagit County Program Proposal

Emily Cone and Whitaker Jamieson

WWU Office of Sustainability

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Executive Summary

Skagit County does not have a textile waste recycling center or filter textiles out of the waste stream, but instead pays to send its trash to Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Klickitat County. However, there are currently many collection sites and bins owned by private entities such as companies and non-profit organizations where donated items are either sold or shipped to other countries for recycling (Appendix A). The County lacks forms of outreach to educate the public about the existence of these sites and bins, as well as what kind of materials are donatable for recycling. The purpose of this project is to recommend a program that will increase redistribution and recycling of textile waste in Skagit County while decreasing the amount of textile waste that ends up in the landfill.

We propose that Skagit County partner with King County and adopt their public outreach campaign called Threadcycle. Through this partnership, Skagit County would have access to their program materials for display on their website, facebook page, newspapers, etc. (Appendix B, item 5). Additionally, the County would enroll local textile collectors and encourage them to display these program materials on their own social media platforms and within stores. We believe that adopting a Skagit Threadcycle campaign would be the best route for reducing the amount of donatable textiles that end up in the landfill because the resources are available at no cost, implementation is well within the means of our budget, and it will help increase recycling of textile waste. We also suggest encouraging local cities to participate in the program and display Threadcycle images on their own social media platforms in order to further the campaigns reach.

Statement of Need

Skagit County currently has to handle textile waste as if it were garbage, which is financially costly to the County and damaging to the environment. In 2015 to 2016, over 4,000 tons of textile waste was sent to the landfill from the County; residential textile waste accounted for a bit less than half of that overall amount at about 2,000 tons (WA Dept. of Eco. pg 105-106). Washington State's residential sector produces about 70,000 tons of textile waste per year (WA Dept. of Eco). Skagit County accounts for 1.7% of Washington's population, but produces 2.8% of residential textile waste in the

state, meaning Skagit generates more than its fair share of textile waste (Vance-Sherman). There is a lack of knowledge among residents that old or worn clothing and other textiles such as belts, purses, shoes, sheets, and more can be donated to places like Value Village, Goodwill, and USAgain. People see worn goods and think that the value is gone, but these textile waste collectors can potentially resell the goods in their stores or ship them to fabric recycling centers around the world. The need Threadcycle addresses is the lack of knowledge among residents that this infrastructure already exists, as well as the fact that textiles such as holey socks and worn shoes can be donated to collectors like Goodwill, Value Village, and USAgain, unless they are wet, moldy, or infested. The Threadcycle campaign works to reduce textile waste in King County and should be implemented in Skagit in order to promote the knowledge that many collectors accept textile materials that would otherwise be sent to landfills.

Project Description

The goal of this project is to reduce the amount of textiles in the Skagit County waste stream and to increase the amount of textiles donated to third-party collectors for redistribution and recycling. By implementing the Threadcycle campaign, Skagit can save time and money because they would be building off a pre-existing program that would be easily adapted for their needs. Utilizing Threadcycle materials throughout Skagit would increase public knowledge of how to properly dispose of textiles and ultimately decrease the amount of textiles that end up in the landfill. We assume that if people learn more about what can be donated or recycled, they will change their habits.

The primary stakeholders for this project are the staff members in the local city and County government that will be maintaining the Skagit Threadcycle campaign. Margo Gillaspy would work directly with collectors to create partnerships, as well as to help assign advertisement projects to fellow County government members with experience in marketing. Skagit County staff, specifically Margo Gillaspy, would continue conversations with King County that we have begun and receive Threadcycle materials, such as brochures, social media posts, partner enrollment guidelines, etc. (Appendix B). These materials would be utilized by the County for display on their social media platforms and Solid Waste Division (SWD) website. The County would then work with public and private entities that collect textiles for reselling and recycling purposes in order to create partnerships that encourage the promotion and distribution of Threadcycle materials across multiple platforms. These partnerships do not include any costs for the County because they are voluntary for collectors. By signing Threadcycle enrollment forms (Appendix B, item 3), which have already been created and utilized by

King County, collectors would commit to participating in the campaign for one year by displaying the program materials on social media, websites, on bins, within stores, etc. (Appendix B, item 5). So far, USAgain and Goodwill have already provided verbal commitment that they would participate in a Skagit Threadcycle campaign. Additionally, there is a potential possibility that Skagit could have access to the Spanish Threadcycle program created by King Count and the Recicla Mas group upon further discussions.

The success of a Skagit Threadcycle campaign would be measured by utilizing surveys created by King County, which would be given to enrolled collectors and cities at the end of their one-year-commitment period (Appendix B, item 4). These surveys ask the participating entities to evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the campaign in their business or jurisdiction to the best of their ability. If collectors or cities have other means of collecting data related to changes in residential donation habits, they would be encouraged to share this information with the County as an additional form of evaluation. Potential collectors that the County plans to create partnerships with would also be involved by displaying Threadcycle ads to customers and providing qualitative evaluations of the campaign.

Budget and Other Resources

The Threadcycle campaign we recommend utilizing can be adopted by Skagit County for no cost. The only condition Skagit must agree to in order to receive the Threadcycle materials is to guarantee that the campaign logo is not altered and the adopted program follows King County's general mission and messaging (Beatty, K). Margo Gillaspay projected that our project would have a budget of \$2,500, however this program could be done for far less. There are many options such as social media and radio ads for Skagit County SWD to pursue that cost nothing beyond staff time, to see a more complete list see Appendix C, Item 1, and to see examples see Appendix B, Item 5. While these forms of advertising are free, related staff hour costs should be budgeted for. If the Skagit SWD wishes to spend money on this project there are options shown in Appendix C, Item 2, such as newspaper ads and facebook ad boosts. Overall, a Skagit Threadcycle program could cost very little and be implemented for much less than the \$2,500 budget stated as the amount we should aim to stay below. The duration of the project would depend on the effectiveness seen within the first years of implementation, however, King County's Threadcycle reports suggest that the longer the campaign is around, the more effective it is (Appendix B Item 1). We recommend setting up a Skagit Threadcycle program so that it could last many years and still cost very little over any amount of time.

Sustainability

The implementation of a Skagit Threadcycle is intended to be relatively simple by encouraging the County to take advantage of pre-existing textile recycling infrastructure and methods maintained by private third-party entities. There are few ongoing costs for this program, except for staff time, which ensures the feasibility of the program. To encourage the sustainability of a Skagit Threadcycle campaign, outreach should be incorporated into Skagit County SWD's future plans to ensure that the donation of textile waste becomes a communal habit. It will take time to change the culture of Skagit County to one that actively and widely participates in donating old textiles, but the work to reduce textile waste by partnering with collectors and cities who would further promote the knowledge that many materials are indeed donatable for recycling purposes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The most important measures for a Skagit Threadcycle campaign are whether enrolled participants value the campaign materials and if donation rates are changing throughout enrollment periods. Threadcycle surveys would be given to enrolled collectors and cities, asking them to evaluate the qualitative usefulness of the campaign to the best of their abilities (Appendix B, Item 2). Ideally, the collectors would also measure how the flow of donations over the course of the campaign change and report statistics to Skagit County, but doing so would not be required. These surveys are a part of the Threadcycle materials and would be easily adaptable for Skagit's needs (Appendix B, Item 2). Besides measuring the overall effects of the outreach, the outreach mechanisms can be measured by monitoring the amount of views a specific ad receives over a period of time.

Conclusion

The Skagit County government pays for waste to be shipped to a landfill and could decrease costs if textile materials were donated to collectors such as Value Village, Goodwill, or USAgain. To address this issue at minimal cost to the SWD, we suggest that a Skagit Threadcycle outreach campaign be utilized to educate Skagit County

residents that they can donate their old textiles regardless of condition unless the textiles are wet, moldy, or contain hazardous material. In summary: we recommend partnering with King County to utilize the Threadcycle campaign; continuing conversations with textile waste collectors; and implementing an outreach campaign that is cost effective. Our recommendation will guide Skagit County's efforts in reducing donatable textile materials that end up in the landfills.

Glossary

Collector: any entity (private, non-profit, or governmental) that accepts textiles as donations for redistribution or recycling

Partnership: a mutually agreed upon set of responsibilities, conditions, and general rules written out and signed between partners

Textile: any cloth or fabric (i.e. cotton, wool, burlap, jute, sisal, polyurethane foam, polyester, nylon, other synthetic fibers, rags, wipers, clothing, and leather)

Textile Waste: cloth or fabric materials deemed unusable due to wear and tear, stains, or other reasons that would make someone want to get rid of them

Sources

Beatty, K. 2017, Oct. 11- December 10th. Interview by email and phone.

Gillapsy, M and Martin, C. 2017, Oct. 2- December 8th. Interview by email and phone.

Threadcycle 2014-2015 Campaign Report [PDF]. 2015 Sept. 8. King County & Seattle Public Utilities.

Threadcycle 2016 Campaign Report [PDF]. 2016-2017. King County & Seattle Public Utilities.

Threadcycle 2017 Campaign Report [PDF]. 2017. King County & Seattle Public Utilities.

Vance-Sherman, Annaliese. "Skagit County Profile." Skagit County Profile, Employment Security Department: Washington State, Sept. 2015, <fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/regional-reports/county-profiles/skagit-county-profile>

WA Dept. of Ecology and Cascadia Consulting Group. Author. 2016 Oct. 16. 2015-2016 Washington Statewide Waste Characterization Study. Publication No. 16-07-032.

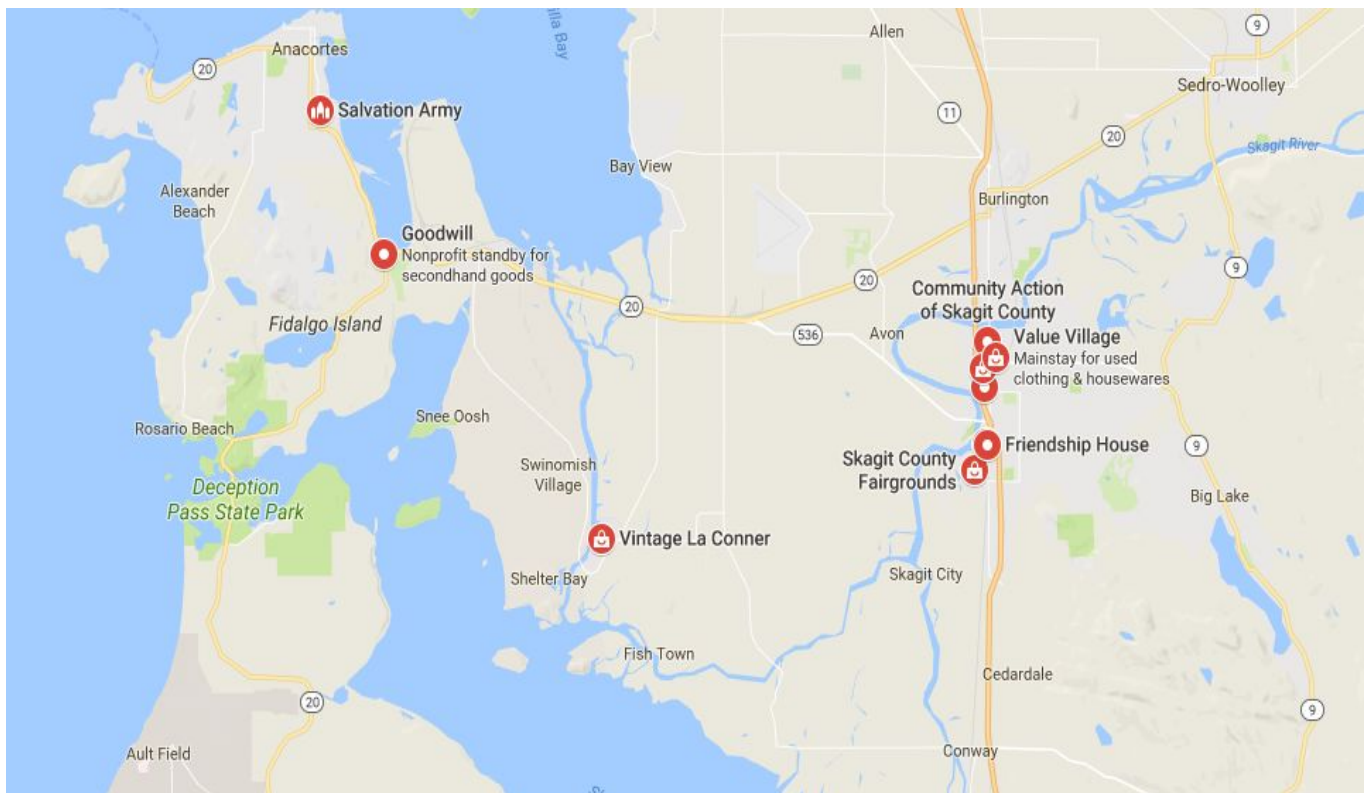
Appendices

Appendix A

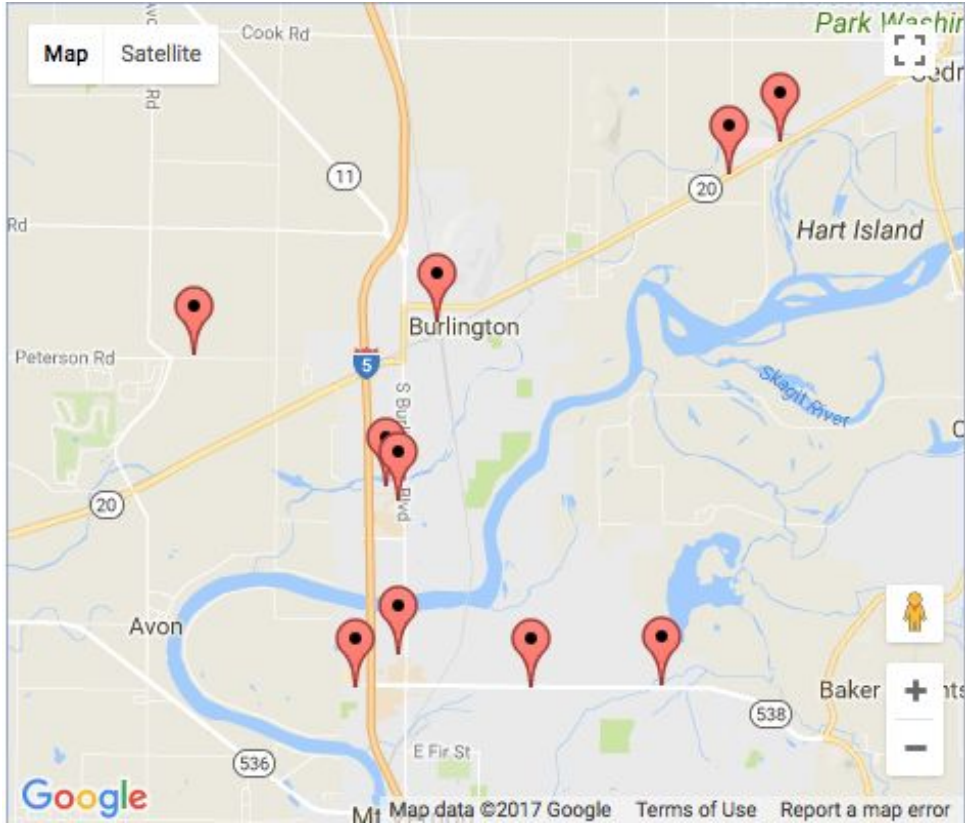
Item 1. Maps

Source: Google Maps

Map of stores that accept textile donations in Skagit County



Map of USAgain (a potential collector-partner) collection bins in Skagit County



Appendix B

Threadcycle Materials

Source: Materials were emailed to us from Kris Beatty at King County Solid Waste Division (Kris.Beatty@kingcounty.gov).

Item 1.

Report Statistics

2014 Survey Result Statistic

- During the campaign period, did you receive more textile donations than usual?
 - Yes: 0
 - No: 4
 - Don't know: 2

2017 Survey Result

3. During the campaign period (March 1 – May 31, 2017), did your organization receive more textiles (clothes, shoes, linens) than during that period the previous year? Please consider this carefully and check with staff.
 - a. Yes: 5
 - b. No: 2
 - c. Don't know: 1

2016-2017 Report statistic showing increase in website views

Threadcycle website statistics	Post 2015 campaign period June 1, 2015 – February 29, 2016	Post 2016 campaign period June 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017	Percentage difference
Unique page views, post campaign period (June-February)	24,234	34,689	+43.14%
Unique page views, campaign period (March 1 – May 31)	For comparison: 2015 campaign period: 53,596	For comparison: 2016 campaign period: 66,108	
Average time on site, total for campaign:	00:01:12	00:01:19	+9.75%
Top ranking (sub)pages, based on unique page views	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Threadcycle home page (9,367 unique page views) 2. Where to give (7,841 unique page views) 3. Acceptable items (3,547 unique page views) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where to give – 15,674 unique page views 2. Threadcycle home page – 11,614 unique page views 3. Acceptable items – 3,868 unique page views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home page: +23.99% • Where to give: +99.90% • Acceptable items: +9.05%

Item 2.

Surveys

Sample Questions from 2017 Threadcycle Collector Survey

Collector survey responses

Eight of the participating collectors filled out the survey: USAgain, TexGreen, The Salvation Army, Big Brothers Big Sisters Puget Sound, Savers/Value Village, Northwest Center, Seattle Goodwill and Goodwill of the Olympics & Rainier Region.

Questions:

1. Do you think this campaign was valuable to your organization?
 - a. Yes: 7
 - b. No: 0
 - c. Don't know: 1

2. Why was or wasn't this campaign valuable to your organization? If you're unsure, why?
 - a. "It helps educate the public on the value of recycling and reusing clothes."
 - b. "This campaign has been incredibly valuable to our organization. Threadcycle has played a huge role in introducing the concept of textile recycling to the people of King County."
 - c. "I believe the exposure through King County and Seattle Public Utilities campaign was beneficial to increasing visibility of our organization and awareness about recycling textiles."
 - d. "It allowed us to utilize the Threadcycle Campaign to reach individuals and have them contact us regarding the donation of textiles and were able to keep such items out of landfills."
 - e. "Anything that can be done to encourage people to donate and/or reuse is a good thing. Including Value Village as a leader in this space speaks to our increased focus on reuse."
 - f. "It was good, but would be more effective if it could be tied in timing-wise with other well-known campaigns like Earth Day."
 - g. "We traditionally take clothes in any condition anyway, so if I had to pick if this was positive or negative, I would say positive as it just affirms what we have been doing."
 - h. "Exposure for our organization as a leader in textile recycling and donation."

3. During the campaign period (March 1 – May 31, 2017), did your organization receive more textiles (clothes, shoes, linens) than during that period the previous year? Please consider this carefully and check with staff.
 - a. Yes: 5
 - b. No: 2
 - c. Don't know: 1

4. Did your organization receive questions or comments from the public about the Threadcycle campaign?
 - a. Yes: 5
 - b. No: 0
 - c. Don't know: 3

5. What were the specific subjects of the questions/comments?
 - a. "People asked what they could donate and where the clothes went."

Item 3.

Pages for Enrollment Forms



Enrollment Form 2017 Threadcycle Campaign Please return by Jan. 25, 2017

CONTACT INFORMATION

Company/Organization name (as you would like it to appear on the campaign website): _____

For getting in touch with the person who filled out this form:

Contact name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA AND AGREEMENT

I understand and agree to the following participation criteria. All boxes must be checked in order to meet campaign criteria:

- Yes, our company/organization intends to participate in the 2017 Threadcycle campaign.
- Yes, I am providing, along with this enrollment form, a vector file of our organization's logo. *Note: If you have participated in the 2015 or 2016 Threadcycle campaign, you only need to submit a vector file if your logo has changed since your participation.
- Yes, I have checked that our organization's logo (attached with this invitation if participated before) is the correct logo to use for the Threadcycle campaign.
- Yes, our company/organization meets the following campaign participation criteria:
 - We are a collector of post-consumer textiles (clothes/shoes/linens) in Seattle and/or King County.
 - Out of our total revenue from the sale of all items, both new and used (post-consumer), the revenue from the sale of new items makes up less than 40% of total sales revenue.



- Yes, our company/organization will share campaign messaging in venues as available, such as fliers, bag stuffers, social media, website, etc., from March 1 — May 31, 2017.
- Yes, our company/organization will meet the commitment to consistent messaging (outlined below), from March 1 — May 31, 2017.
- Yes, our company/organization will educate our organization's employees whose job it is to receive donations on Threadcycle messaging, including which items are acceptable. We will use the following tactics by March 15, 2017 (check all that apply; must check at least one to participate):
 - Discuss Threadcycle messaging and acceptable items during staff meeting
 - Distribute fliers to employees — via payroll stuffer, newsletter, employee lockers, or distributed with work schedules
 - Pin up posters in prominent location (for example, by time clock, in breakroom, and/or in receiving/sorting area)
 - Other (please specify): _____
- Yes, by April 14, 2017, our organization will share details on how we've participated, and submit samples of each of the campaign promotional materials, using approved Threadcycle messaging, that we used during the campaign.
- Yes, our company/organization is committed to continuing the use of Threadcycle messaging year round, and will continue to encourage consumers to give all their clothes, shoes and linens for reuse or recycling, as long as not wet, mildewed or contaminated with hazardous materials.
- Yes, our company/organization will complete a post-campaign survey, sharing whether we saw a rise in awareness of textile recycling and we will indicate whether and by approximately how much we increased our textile collections during the March 1 — May 31 campaign period.



DONATION LOCATIONS LISTINGS, COLLECTION CONTAINER SERVICES AND PICK-UP SERVICE INFORMATION

Please provide the following information about your available services for textile collection:

Donation locations listings

The following links and information are listed on the "Where to Give" section of the Threadcycle website. If your organization participated in the 2016 Threadcycle campaign and the information on the webpage listed above ("Where to Give") is correct, you may skip this section by checking the box below.

- Yes, our organization participated in the 2016 Threadcycle campaign and I have verified that the information listed on "Where to Give" is correct. I have no additional changes to request.

If your organization did not participate in last year's campaign, please fill out the section below to let us know what URLs (web links) and information the Threadcycle website should include for your organization. If your organization does not offer one of the following services, please write "not offered".

Main Website URL: _____

Do you have drop boxes where people can donate? Yes No

"Find a Drop-Box" URL: _____

Do you have thrift stores where people can donate? Yes No

"Find a Thrift Store" URL: _____

Do you offer residential donation pickup services? Yes No

"Schedule a home pickup online" URL: _____

"Schedule a home pickup by phone" Number/name: _____

If you have additional notes on these services, please share them here: _____

Collection container services



- Yes, our company/organization will share campaign messaging in venues as available, such as fliers, bag stuffers, social media, website, etc., from March 1 — May 31, 2017.
- Yes, our company/organization will meet the commitment to consistent messaging (outlined below), from March 1 — May 31, 2017.
- Yes, our company/organization will educate our organization's employees whose job it is to receive donations on Threadcycle messaging, including which items are acceptable. We will use the following tactics by March 15, 2017 (check all that apply; must check at least one to participate):
 - Discuss Threadcycle messaging and acceptable items during staff meeting
 - Distribute fliers to employees — via payroll stuffer, newsletter, employee lockers, or distributed with work schedules
 - Pin up posters in prominent location (for example, by time clock, in breakroom, and/or in receiving/sorting area)
 - Other (please specify): _____
- Note: This employee education requirement is only applicable to collectors who have employees that receive (or may receive) items (in stores, by collection trucks, at events, etc.) — not applicable to drop-box-only collectors.
- Yes, by April 14, 2017, our organization will share details on how we've participated, and submit samples of each of the campaign promotional materials, using approved Threadcycle messaging, that we used during the campaign.
- Yes, our company/organization is committed to continuing the use of Threadcycle messaging year round, and will continue to encourage consumers to give all their clothes, shoes and linens for reuse or recycling, as long as not wet, mildewed or contaminated with hazardous materials.
- Yes, our company/organization will complete a post-campaign survey, sharing whether we saw a rise in awareness of textile recycling and we will indicate whether and by approximately how much we increased our textile collections during the March 1 — May 31 campaign period.

COMMITMENT TO CONSISTENT MESSAGING

For this campaign to succeed, messaging to the public must be consistent. Messaging that suggests collection of only "gently used" clothes, shoes and linens confuses customers when the campaign is promoting the message that ripped, torn and stained textiles are also accepted. The core campaign message is "Give all clothes, shoes and linens for reuse or recycling in any condition except wet."

We understand that the "gently used" requirement may be necessary for other items you collect (for example, furniture, light fixtures, art, small electronics and other items). However, we ask that collectors make it clear that clothing, shoes, linens and other textiles are accepted in any condition except wet, mildewed or contaminated with hazardous materials.

Do you have any communication venues that currently say clothes, shoes, and linens must be "gently used" (or similar messaging)? Please check all that apply.

- Website Emails Brochures
- Bag stuffers Fliers In-store signage
- Collection box signage Trucks or truck decals Mailings or mailed newsletters
- Fliers and/or receipts given upon donation
- Advertisements (print, radio, TV, online or other)
- Internal communications (e.g. instructions to employees about acceptance policies)
- Other (please specify): _____

If you checked any of the boxes above, please specify how you plan on altering this messaging below; changes to the messaging must be implemented by Feb. 17, 2017. If you are unable to alter the messaging, please tell us your barriers.

- I have substantial barriers to updating this type of messaging, or have questions about how to incorporate the campaign messaging and need someone to contact me.



Please complete the following information if you want to be listed as a service provider of indoor and/or outdoor collection containers. This will be posted online and given to owners/managers of multi-family residential and other similar properties.

Check the type of collection containers your organization provides:

- Outdoor, secure metal container Indoor cardboard container
- Other (please describe) _____

Location on your website where property owners/managers can find information about your collection container services [URL]: _____

Primary contact for collection container services:

Contact name & phone number: _____

Email address: _____

COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK

If you have additional comments, please share them here: _____

By Jan. 25, 2017, return this form along with a vector file of your organization's logo (unless you have previously submitted one), to: Ellis Jones at Ellis.Jones@kingcounty.gov or mail to King County Solid Waste Division, Recycling & Environmental Services, ATTN: Ellis Jones, 201 S. Jackson St, Suite 701, Seattle WA 98104.

Alternative formats available upon request

206-477-4466 • TTY Relay: 711 • 1-800-325-6165 ext. 7-4466

Item 4.

Recicla Mas summary information from Powerpoint Presentation



In Summary...

Hispanic/ Latinos have a distinct behavior funnel when it comes to textile disposal. Access and understanding of these cultural nuances is essential to successful introduction and promotion of the campaign in the Hispanic/Latino community.

Robust talking points on what happens to the items after they are taken to the thrift store, and what new items are created as a result, will create effective engagement with the Spanish-speaking audience.

The recommended changes to the name, tagline, and visuals will make these elements easier to identify and make behaviors easier to adopt for Hispanics/Latinos community.

Item 5.

Sample posts/images

Seattle Goodwill:

Bin sticker



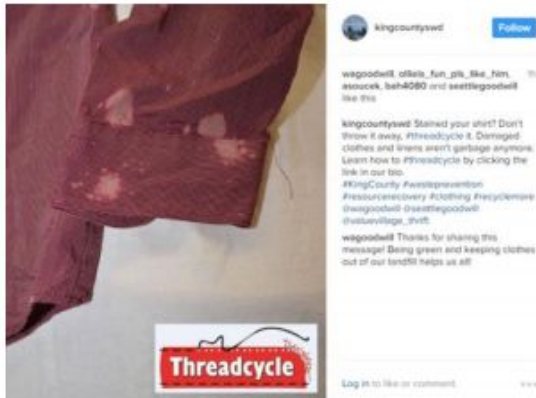
City of Burien

Social media





Sample social media posts featuring Threadcycle



Appendix C

Item 1.

Source: estimates from Callie Martin and Margo Gillaspay
Advertising methods that cost no upfront money.

Advertisement Type	Facebook/Social Media	Info on SWD Website	Radio Ads (KSVR)	Interior Bus Ads
Cost	Free	Free	Free	Free

Item 2.

Source: estimates from Callie Martin and Margo Gillaspay
Advertising methods that cost money. Links to billboard advertising sites in Skagit County are located below the chart.

Advertisement Type	Facebook Ad Boosts	Skagit Newspaper	Billboard
Cost	\$30 - \$50 per event	\$200 per ad	Generally not cost effective

Mt. Vernon Billboards:

<http://www.parkeroutdoorinc.com/seattle-billboards/seattle-area-billboards/mt-vernon-board>

<http://www.billboardadvertisingdirect.com/billboard-advertising/wa/mount-vernon.php>

Burlington Billboards:

<http://www.billboardadvertisingdirect.com/digital-billboards/wa/burlington.php>

Anacortes:

<http://www.billboardadvertisingdirect.com/billboard-advertising/wa/anacortes.php>